2 Reported With Sirhan When He Bought Bullets

By George Lardner Jr. Post 6/16/68
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LOS ANGELES, June 15—The Saturday before the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, his alleged killer, Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, walked into the Lock, Stock 'N Barrel Shop in Suburban San Gabriel.

The proprietors of the gun shop, Ben and Dona Herrick, say there were two men with him.

"There were three guys, all dark and small," Herrick, 42, declared yesterday.

Clerk Larry Arnot said he waited on them.

The receipt from the sale that afternoon—$3.99 including tax, for four boxes of .22 caliber bullets—was found in Sirhan's care near the Ambassador Hotel after the shooting.

The recollections at the gun shop built up after that.

"When I saw the (Sirhan's picture in the paper, I had the feeling that I had seen him somewhere, but it didn't dawn on me at the time that he was the one I had sold the bullets to," Arnot said.

"A day later—or maybe it was a couple of days later, I can't remember—the owners got the information that we had sold the ammunition.

"I said then, to my employer's wife, Dona, and Ben, "By

See SIRHAN, A16, Col. 3

Bullet Sales to Sirhan

SIRHAN From A1

golly, I waited on that guy.' The bell rang just like that. Before that, I had halfway discharged it from my mind that I had seen this guy somewhere before."

What police make of all this is not clear. They have, inevitably, received hundreds of tips, rumors and reports that a conspiracy may have been involved. Yet days have passed and no one appears to have unearthed any close friends or associates of the 24-year-old Jordanian immigrant indicted for the slaying.

If any are found, it remains to be ssen what, if anything, Sirhan told them of his interest in guns or Sen. Kennedy.

It may take months, perhaps years to sort out the facts.

At the fun shop, nestled in a shopping center with a Wild West motif, the Herricks, who said they have talked to police twice, and Arnot, who said he has not been questioned at all, were quite firm about Sirhan being accompanied by two other men.

Recalls Earlier Visit

Mrs. Herrick declared that she also remembered an earlier visit to the store, about a month and a half ago, by Sirhan—again, she said, with the same two men.

There was no sale on the first trip, she said. Mrs. Herrick said the men asked whether the shop carried amor-piercing. .357 magnum ammunition such as California Highway patrolemen use for their 3.8 caliber revolvers.

Her husband said they asked the same question that Saturday, June 1, before buying the .22s.

"We carry it," Herrick said, "but I told them we didn't have it because I don't want to sell that kind of stuff to guys like that." Herrick said he stocks the ammunition for police officers and makes it a practice not to sell it to anyone else. "I figure they had no business having that stuff," he said.

According to the receipt that was found in Sirhan's car, two of the boxes of .22s were "mini-mags." Some gun buffs call them hollow points." They usually split off on impact.

Seen Practicing.

Three days later, Sirhan was seen practicing rapid-fire shooting at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club in Fish Comyon about 10 miles from the gun shop.

One witness, Henry A. Carreon, told the Los Angeles County Grand Jury that he and a companion, David Montellano, both noticed Sirhan "shooting very rapidly on the range with a revolver"—a .22-caliver Iver Johnson.

Sirhan, the grand jury was told, also had with him a box of "mini-mag" bullets set aside from the rest of his ammunition. A similar box was found in his car after the assassination.

In still other testimony, the Grand Jury heard Vincent Dipierro, a 19-year-old college freshman, tell of seeing a shapely girl in a polka-dot dress standing next to Sirhan and apparently chatting, and smiling at each other, just before Kennedy was gunned down.

And at the San Gabriel Valley Gun Club yesterday, one of the habitues insisted that he too, had seen Sirhan there —with a girl, and "another guy." He did not say when'

[A national police bulletin is still out for "the girl in the polka dot dress" in the assassination, Los Angeles authorities asserted today, according to United Press International.]

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Asked at first by a reporter if he remembered seeing Sirhan at the practice range, he loudly professed a determination to keep his mouth shut.

But as customers and spectators moved away, he said: "If you ask me who was here talking to me, the police or the FBI, I guess I'd have to tell you: Both of them."

He said he'd been warned that if he said anything about the case, he could get six months in jail (presumably for violating a court order restricting comment). But then he turned more loquacious.

'Dozen Times More'

"I know a lot more than I'm telling you—a dozen times more than you think I do," he said, adding softly;

"I saw them all together."

"You mean Sirhan?"

"Yes, him, a woman and another guy. Remember, I said t-h-e-m."

He refused to elaborate. A customer drew near and the gun club member said noisily, "I told you I can't say anything."

Lloyd Hager, manager of the National Rifle Association-sponsored gun club, said he knew of no girl or any other companions with Sirhan. As far as he could tell, he said Sirhan had been at the range only once, alone, in the early afternoon before the assassination.

"I can't even recall him being here that day," Hager said. "But he must have been because his name is on the log." Generally those who use the practice range are supposed to sign in.

on June 1 Are Recalled

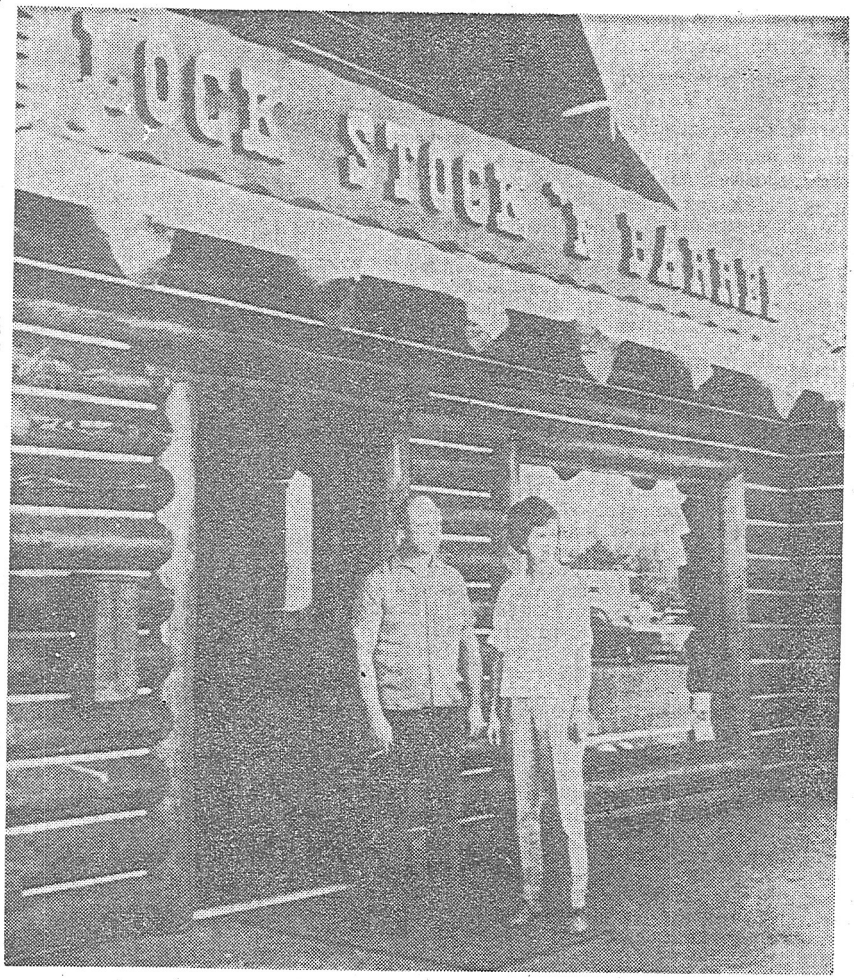

Photo by Ben W. White

Ben Herrick, 42, and wife, Dona, in front of their San Gabriel, Calif., gunshop, which sold ammunition including minums to a man they have identified as Kennedy assassination suspect Sirhan. They recall two men accompanied Sirhan.